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GOOGLE TO INVEST $10 BN, SET UP ITS GLOBAL FINTECH CENTRE IN GUJARAT

Google CEO Sundar Pichai informed Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the firm's plan to invest $10 billion in India's digitisation fund

GOOGLE TO TAKE TECH BEHIND UPI GLOBAL

The US tech giant will open its Fintech Global Operations Center in GIFT City, Gujarat, which will have teams working on specialised operations supporting Google Pay and its other products. Commenting on the development, Pichai said, the new project will cement India's leadership in fintech. He praised India's leadership in UPI and said Google will work to take it global

BARD TO BE OFFERED IN MORE LANGUAGES

- Apart from fintech, Google is also planning to boost its artificial intelligence services in India. Pichai said Google's Bard, a conversational chatbot powered by AI will be expanded to more Indian languages
- Modi and Pichai also discussed boosting partnerships between Google and Indian academic institutions to promote research and skill development

2004

WHEN GOOGLE BEGAN OPERATING IN INDIA. IT NOW HAS OFFICES IN FIVE INDIAN CITIES

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Modi begins Egypt visit, to meet Prez Sisi today

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Cairo from the US on Saturday for a two-day state visit and was welcomed at the airport by his Egyptian counterpart Mostafa Madbouly with a warm embrace. This is the first bilateral visit to Egypt after 1997 by any Indian PM.

India hopes to sign a $5 billion defence deal with Egypt. It has already escalated the African Union's request to become a member of the G20. New Delhi has invited Cairo as a guest for the G20 meet.

India could announce a credit line for Egypt to help their economy and boost trade. Egypt need food and wheat and India could go for a swap deal, said sources.

"I thank PM Madbouly for the special gesture of welcoming me at the airport. I hope the Indo-Egyptian relations will flourish for the benefit of the people of our two nations," Modi said.

Modi then met the Indian diaspora before holding bilateral talks with his counterpart Madbouly.

"I am deeply moved by the Indian diaspora in Egypt. Their support and affection truly embody the timeless bonds of our nations. Also noteworthy was people from Egypt wearing Indian dresses. Truly a celebration of our shared cultural linkages," said Modi.

A video of an Egyptian woman singing a popular Hindi numbar, *Yeh dosti hum nahi todenge* from the iconic Bollywood film *Sholay* went viral. Modi listened to it attentively and expressed his appreciation. Members of the Indian diaspora flocked around the Ritz Carlton hotel, where Modi is staying.

The PM will hold bilateral talks with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Sunday. Sisi was the chief guest during the Republic Day this year and has been to India twice before that since 2015.

On Sunday, he will visit Cairo's Al-Hakim Mosque that was restored with the help of India's Dawoodi Bohra community.

U-turn after rebellion against Putin

Wagner boss orders mercenary convoy heading to Moscow to return, saying he did not want to spill Russian blood

Members of the mercenary Wagner group detain a man in the city of Rostov-on-Don on Saturday | AFP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

A mercenary group promoted and patronised by President Vladimir Putin became a Frankenstein monster on Saturday, capturing a key southern city and launching a rebellion against the Russian establishment.

The situation dramatically changed later in the day as Wagner group chief Yevgeny Prigozhin ordered his troops heading to Moscow to stand down and return to their field camps in Ukraine. The order came after Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko spoke to Prigozhin, reports said.

"We are turning our columns around and going back to field camps," the Wagner boss said, claiming he did not want to spill Russian blood.

An indication of the national mood came from reports of locals raising slogans in favour of Wagner in southern Russia. Prigozhin's rebellion was the culmination of his spat with Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu.

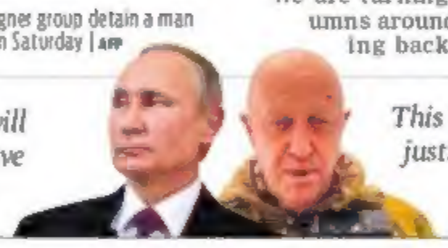
Earlier in the day, Prigozhin's 25,000-strong private army claimed control over the military headquarters in the city of Rostov-on-Don, over 1,000 km south of Moscow, from where Russia controls its Ukraine operations.

Wagner's troops and tanks also rolled into Lipetsk province, about 360 km south of Moscow. The group's hired guns are also said to have seized military facilities in Voronezh — halfway between Rostov and Moscow — in their blitzkrieg. Their convoy was seen moving north towards Moscow beyond Lipetsk, its governor said.

For his part, Putin promised harsh punishment for Prigozhin, denouncing his uprising as a stab in the back. This was by far the biggest threat to Putin's leadership in over two decades in power.

"All those who prepared the rebellion will suffer inevitable punishment," Putin said. Joining issue with him, Prigozhin said his fighters would not surrender. He claimed he wanted to punish defence minister Shoigu as Russian forces were attacking Wagner camps in Ukraine. He alleged that Gen Valery Gerasimov, chief of the General Staff, ordered the attacks following a meeting with Shoigu.

All those who prepared the rebellion will suffer inevitable punishment. They have stabbed me in my back —Vladimir Putin



This is not a military coup, but a march of justice. Regarding betrayal, the President is deeply mistaken —Yevgeny Prigozhin

INSIDE

WORLD ON EDGE, FEARS NUCLEAR RISK | P11

THE CHEF WHO COOKED UP A REBELLION | P11

Oppn seeks all-party team visit to Manipur

Union Home Minister Amit Shah chairs an all-party meeting on Manipur situation | PTI

AMIT MUKHERJEE @ New Delhi

OPPOSITION political parties on Saturday suggested an all-party visit to the violence-torn Manipur as part of confidence-building measures after Union home minister Amit Shah briefed them on the situation in the state and made a presentation on the steps taken by the Centre so far.

Shah's initiative came against the backdrop of unabated violence since the ethnic clashes broke out on May 3. The presentation on the current situation covered Manipur's existing demography and historic facts. The briefing also dwelt on the reasons leading to the flare-up in the northeastern state.

Shah told representatives of political parties in the national capital that a 10-km-long fencing has already been completed along the Myanmar border from where illegal migrants enter the country. More such work needs to be done, he said. The home minister told the parties that most youngsters have surrendered their weapons. Shah later said that the Centre has taken suggestions and steps will be taken in the right direction.

Apart from thre demand for an all-party delegation's visit, the parties suggested calibrated use of force to instill confidence among people and the formation of a team to start dialogue with all affected communities.

Mob sets fire to minister's godown

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

A mob torched a godown of Manipur's Public Health Engineering and Consumer Affairs Minister L Susindro Meitei for protecting two women – alleged informers of Kuki militants.

The attack took place on Friday night at Chingarel in the Imphal East district. Plastic pipes for sewage worth ₹120 crore and other materials were gutted.

An attempt was also made to burn the minister's private residence later but the security forces thwarted it by using force. Security was heightened at the house as he anticipated an attack. Earlier in the day, a mob had caught the two women and beaten them up for allegedly passing information to Kuki militants. Soon, the police, leaders of some organisations and the minister arrived. Later, the minister took the duo in a car of his convoy and left for Imphal.

However, another mob stopped the vehicles on the way and the personnel dispersed the people by firing blank shots. When word spread that the minister was protecting two "spies", a mob attacked his private property.

BBMP polls by December, says Ramalinga

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

TRANSPORT Minister Ramalinga Reddy said on Saturday that elections to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Council will be held by December.

The state government on Friday ordered setting up of new committees for delimitation of BBMP wards.

"The findings of the previous committee have been challenged in court. The previous committee went ahead with gerrymandering of ward boundaries to suit those in power then. And let none of us forget that they did all this after their stipulated time ended and the committee's very legitimacy stood in question," Reddy told TNSE.

He said, "While the delimitation commission was constituted on January 29, 2021, with a tenure of six months, the report was submitted on June 23, 2022. This was nearly 11 months after the tenure of the commission ended. On July 6, a scrutiny committee was constituted to review objections."

Reddy said, "The High Court judge stated that there was no legally constituted delimitation commission, and its tenure was extended post facto, which is bad in law." He said the notification was issued on July 14 in an irregular manner. "The previous government first decided the number of wards and only then constituted the delimitation commission. This responsibility rests with the delimitation commission," he added. He said, "The High Court also noted there exists a clear deviation of 12%, a violation of rules."

The findings of the previous committee have been challenged in court. The previous committee went ahead with gerrymandering of ward boundaries to suit those in power then - Ramalinga Reddy

Experts bat for EU-like policy to reduce e-waste

PURAN CHOUDHARY @ Bengaluru

Bengaluru ranks third among the highest electronic waste producing cities in the country.

With the situation alarming, consumers and experts have stressed the need for efforts to reduce e-waste in the state, starting with standardisation of chargers. As per data by Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), the state produced around 1.2 lakh tonnes of e-waste in 2021-2022. The new rules notified in 2022 increased the items under the e-waste category from 21 to 106.

The Centre is all set to adopt the recommendations of the consumer affairs committee on common charging ports like the EU, and this will be the first step in resolving the e-waste problem in the country.

A recent study by LocalCircles, which enables citizens and small businesses for policy changes, revealed that 9 in 10 consumers in the country want USB Type-C as standard charging port for all electronic products. P7

EXPRESS READ

B'luru student detained for filming women in bathroom

Bengaluru: The Mahadevapura police have detained a student in the city on the charge of voyeurism. The police action came based on a complaint filed by four women from Thigalarapalya in Hoodi Thursday, accusing the student and his friends, staying in a PG adjacent to their apartment, of taking photos and filming them when they were in the bathroom | P3

Siddu shuns Vaastu, takes South door

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THIS was the South facing door in the CMO in Vidhana Soudha that was shut, and no CM in the past dared to walk through it. The reason: It was not Vaastu compliant and walking through it was considered inauspicious.

CM Siddaramaiah asked DPAR officials about who had the keys and got it opened and walked through it. Siddaramaiah, who arrived at Vidhana Soudha to hold a meeting with senior officials on Anna Bhagya, noticed the South door was closed.

CM Siddaramaiah walks through the South door in Vidhana Soudha on Saturday

After learning about the reason, he said, "A healthy mind, a clean heart, caring for other people, good clean air and good illumination is the best Vaastu."

In contrast, Vidhana Soudha has seen structural alterations such as breaking walls, shifting doors from one end to the other, keeping water tanks always full and many other remedies in the rooms of ministers to make them Vaastu-compliant.

Siddaramaiah had visited Chamarajanagar as CM many times from 2013 to 2018 although other CMs were scared to go there for the fear of losing power.

Former IGP K Arkesh, who was a member of the Anti-Superstition Committee, said, "Siddaramaiah is doing this to promote scientific temper. It is a constitutional mandate. He is systematically trying to prove that superstitions are dangerous."